

# The Missouri Public Service Commission

*Informed Consumers, Quality Utility Services, and a Dedicated Organization for Missourians in the 21st Century*



## A MEDIA GUIDE TO THE PSC

*The Missouri Public Service Commission regulates the rates, service and operation of more than 1,000 investor-owned electric, natural gas, telephone, water and sewer companies, and manufactured housing dealers. The PSC is responsible for deciding cases that are brought before it and for enforcing administrative rules under which a utility company must operate. This process can be complex. This fact sheet is designed as a tool to assist the news media in understanding how this process works.*

### Key Players:

- ◆ **PSC COMMISSIONERS** -- Five members appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the state Senate, Commissioners serve six-year terms. They decide all cases before the PSC.
- ◆ **PSC STAFF** -- Often referred to as **Staff**. This is a group of professionals in the fields of engineering, accounting, law, finance, and economics. **The Staff is separate from the Commission.** Staff is a party in all cases before the Commission. When the staff makes a recommendation to the Commission, it is **NOT** an official decision by the Commission. The recommendation carries the same weight (no more, no less) as all other testimony filed in a case. The five-member Commission must issue a ruling based on all of the evidence presented.
- ◆ **OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC COUNSEL** -- A separate state agency that represents the general public in proceedings before the PSC.
- ◆ **INTERVENORS** -- Someone who files to participate in a proceeding before a regulatory commission. Intervenors are usually large business customers, governmental agencies, or representatives of a customer group with a particular interest in the case.

### What Happens When A Rate Case Is Filed?

The Commission rules on a variety of issues, most notably rate case proceedings. Once a utility files a request to raise its rates, the Commission generally has 11 months from the date the case is filed to make a decision.

After a case is filed, the PSC staff will conduct an on-site audit of the books and records of the company. This process can take several weeks. Other interested parties are also given an opportunity to present evidence (testimony). At formal hearings, participants present evidence before the Commission in a trial-like setting.

### How Are Decisions By The PSC Issued?

After examining all of the evidence, the Commission will vote on the matter in an agenda meeting. The decision is issued through a written report and order. That decision is subject to appeal to the courts by all parties, except the PSC staff.

### Where To Get Information

The Public Information and Education Department maintains a List Serve for consumer issues and press releases. Scheduled agendas, minutes, press releases and publications are on the PSC website: [www.psc.state.mo.us](http://www.psc.state.mo.us)

### KEY TERMS

**Agenda** -- The list of items to be addressed by the Commission during its meeting.

**Tariff** -- Information on file with the Commission which describes the rates and charges of a utility along with the rules and regulations of that company.

**Pre-Hearing Conference** -- Parties to a case meet to discuss the issues to be decided in the case and to schedule further proceedings if necessary.

**Evidentiary Hearing** -- A public hearing before the commission at which time parties to a proceeding present evidence on issues in the case. During this proceeding, witnesses may also be cross-examined by other parties to the case.

**Stipulated Agreement** -- Parties to a case agree to a term(s) or condition(s) in an agreement and file it for Commission consideration.